

St. Augustine School  
923 Bank Street  
Cincinnati  
Hamilton County  
Ohio

HABS No. OH-2200-P

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OHIO  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. OH-2200-P

## ST. AUGUSTINE SCHOOL

Location: 923 Bank Street, Cincinnati,  
Hamilton County, Ohio

Within the Dayton Street Historic District, USGS  
Covington Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinates: 16.713800.4332700, 16.713780.4332230,  
16.713250.4332410 and 16.713110.4332750

Present Owner: Archbishop of Cincinnati as Trustee of the Roman  
Catholic Archdiocese

Present Occupant Vacant

Present Use: None, scheduled for demolition in September 1974.

Significance: This is a large, three story school building whose archi-  
tectural character evidences the last phases of the vernacu-  
lar nineteenth century classical revival. It is the only  
such building in what is now designated the Dayton Street  
Historic Interest Area, and is important as part of the  
architectural context of its time and place.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

## A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The school stands on a parcel of land originally sold on October 13, 1794 to Jonathan Dayton of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, for \$43,897.00 by John Cleves Symmes, who obtained the original patent for the Miami Purchase from the United States Congress.

William Henry Harrison, ninth President of the United States, on October 1, 1818, as an executor of the estate of Symmes, and as then Governor of the Indiana Territory, re-negotiated the sale, inasmuch as the original deed was said to have been lost. Because of the riots and fire of 1884, the records contained in the Hamilton County Court House were either partially or totally destroyed, thus making the present records an incomplete source of information. It is known from the remaining records that John B. Purcell, as then Archbishop of Cincinnati, purchased several lots of land on Bank Street in 1861, and a portion of an additional adjacent lot in 1865. It is upon this land that the school was built. Between those dates and the present, the property was remained in the ownership of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

2. Date of erection: The date 1863 is prominently displayed over what was the main entrance on Bank Street.
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Alterations and additions: Two additions, of unknown dates, have been made to the rear of the building. The main entrance on Bank Street was bricked in at an unknown time. Entry is now via a side door.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the School:

John Baptist Purcell was born on February 26, 1800, in Ireland. At the age of 18 he departed for the United States where almost immediately upon arriving he was hired as a private teacher, owing to his previous education, to a family in Queen Anne County, Maryland. He commenced his studies for the priesthood in June of 1820. They were completed at the Seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris. On May 21, 1826, he was ordained in Notre Dame of Paris. In 1827 he returned to the United States. On October 13, 1833, he was consecrated Bishop of Cincinnati in the Cathedral of Baltimore. In 1850 he became Archbishop of Cincinnati. During his time in Cincinnati he was responsible for the building of several schools and churches in the city. General William Henry Harrison was one of his close friends. He died on July 4, 1883.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: None known.
2. Bibliography:

Purchase of Lot #7 by John Purcell: Deed Book 277, p.341.

Purchase of Lots #8 & 9 by John Purcell: Deed Book 277, p.339.

Purchase of portion of Lot #10 by John Purcell: Deed Book 315, p.608

History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio

S. B. Nelson & Co., Publishers, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1894. p.758

Prepared by: Carl A. Saladino  
Project Historian  
National Park Service  
August, 1974

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Information:

1. Architectural character: This simple school building with classical details is one of the oldest structures in the immediate area surrounding the Dayton Street Historic Interest Area.

2. Condition of fabric: Although structurally sound, the building is badly deteriorated and is scheduled to be razed during the autumn of 1974.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The original T-shaped block is approximately 65'-0" by 70'-0" and three stories high. Two later additions to the rear are each rectangular and three stories high.
2. Foundations: Limestone throughout.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Red common brick.
4. Structural system, framing: Masonry bearing walls.
5. Porches, stoops: Original north entrance with pediment and Corinthian pilasters has been closed with brick to match the wall.
6. Chimneys: There are four brick chimneys in the exterior walls.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The existing entrances are located at the inside corners of the "T". The double swinging doors each have four wooden lower panels and six glass upper panels.
  - b. Windows, shutters: Double-hung windows throughout with twelve-over-twelve-lights.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with standing seam metal covering.
  - b. Cornice: Overhanging cornice with dentils.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
  - a. The basement and three floors of the original T-shaped block are each the same. There is a single classroom and a stairwell in the leg of the "T" and two classrooms on the bar of the "T".
  - b. The rear wing has no basement. There is a gymnasium space on the first floor. There are two classrooms separated by an office on each of the two upper floors.
  - c. The connecting wing has a basement storage room. There is a large meeting room on the first floor. there are two classrooms on each of the two upper floors.

2. Stairways: There is a stairway from the basement to the top floor at the junction of the leg and the bar of the "T" in the original unit. There are stairwells in the northeast corner and the northwest corner of the rear wing. The metal stairs and railings have concrete treads.
3. Flooring: The stairwells have concrete floors painted gray. The remainder of the floors have two-and-one-half inch hardwood boards.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster in various light colors. Each room also has numerous original black slate blackboards.
5. Doorways and doors: Doorways are framed by simple sawn and planed boards. The wooden doors are four-paneled throughout. All doors and frames are painted a maroon color.
6. Decorative features and trim: The most noticeable trim in the school is that surrounding the blackboards and including wooden chalk trays.
7. Hardware: All original hardware has been replaced by hardware which appears to date from the 1920s.
8. Lighting: All original lighting has been replaced by indirect ceiling-hung fixtures.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The school is on the south side of Bank Street one block north of the Dayton Street Historic Interest Area.
2. Other buildings: There are a newer school building just to the east (the auditorium of which is now used as the church) and a rectory adjacent just east of the newer school building. The original church was across Bank Street on the north side of the street and was razed to permit the widening of Bank Street.

Prepared by: J. William Rudd  
Project Supervisor  
National Park Service  
August, 1974

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These data are part of the documentation made during the 1974 Cincinnati Project undertaken by HABS in cooperation with the Miami Purchase Association and City of Cincinnati. Records were made of a part of the Dayton Street Historic interest Area of the City of Cincinnati.

The project was under the general supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The project supervisor was J. William Rudd of the University of Cincinnati. The project historian was Carl A. Saladino of the Ohio State University. The measured drawings for the project were prepared by architects Steven B. Kells (University of Cincinnati) and Richard Wyatt (California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo), and student assistant architects William Maxwell Miller (University of Pennsylvania) and Osbourne K. Simms III (University of Illinois, Chicago Circle). The photographs were taken by Fred Kline in July 1974.